**Story of the Trojan War**

Read on to know more about the story of the Trojan War…



**History of the Trojan War**   
  
The history of the Trojan war, just like any other story out of Greek Mythology, begins with the Gods.   
  
It is said that all the Gods gathered at the marriage of Peleus and Thetis and they all brought gifts. However, Eris, the goddess of Discord, was stopped at the door by Hermes. She was angered and so she threw her gift from the door. It was an apple with the words ‘To The Fairest’ inscribed on it. This apple became a source of conflict between three goddesses: Hera, Athena and Aphrodite.   
  
All the three felt that each of them deserved the apple. None of the gods wanted to judge because choosing one would ensure the wrath of the other two. Finally, the conflict took them to Hermes, who led them to Paris, who was a prince of Troy. The three goddesses appeared naked to Paris, but he was still unable to judge them. So then, they offered him bribes. Hera offered him control of Asia Minor and political power if he chose her. Athena offered him the abilities of the greatest warriors, skill in battle and wisdom if he chose her. Aphrodite offered him the love of the most beautiful woman in the world, Helen of Sparta, if he chose her.   
  
Of course, Paris chose Aphrodite. This action set in motion several things which would eventually culminate in the Trojan War.

**Summary for the Trojan War**   
  
The entire story of the Trojan War is full of stories and is quite an involved tale. The tale is gleaned from a variety of sources from Greek Literature, which include ‘The Iliad’ and ‘Odyssey" by Homer, the Cyclic Epics, and ‘The Aeneid’ by Aeneas. And as tales from myths go, this one also has its share of stories within the stories.   
  
Here is a brief summary of the Trojan War.   
  
On a diplomatic mission from Troy to Sparta, Helen and Paris fell in love with each other. At that time, Menelaus (husband of Helen and King of Sparta), had left for Crete to attend his uncle’s funeral. Paris and Helen eloped and set sail to Troy.   
  
When Menelaus returned, he discovered this and was very angry. He asked his brother Agamemnon to help him get Helen back from Troy. Agamemnon then sent several emissaries to the Achaean kings and princes to help retrieve Helen. There Achaean kings and princes were the past suitors of Helen, and upon Helen’s marriage to Menelaus had taken the oath to come to Menelaus’ aid in case any harm befell Helen.   
  
Several of these kings and princes tried tricks to avoid the ensuing war. Odysseus tried to portray that he was mad. Achilles’ mother, Thetis, disguised him as a woman so that he could not go for the war. But eventually, they were discovered, and they all gathered together.   
  
All the suitors gathered at Aulis and made a sacrifice to Apollo. At the end of the sacrifice, a snake slithered out from the altar and then went to a sparrow’s nest and ate the mother and her eight babies and then was turned to stone. From this, they deduced that Troy would fall in the 10th year of war.   
  
The Achaeans left for war in ships and accidentally landed in Mysia which was ruled by King Telephus, who was the son of Heracles. They ended up fighting a war. Afterwards, the ships were caught up and scattered by a storm.   
  
Finally, eight years after they had set sail, the ships finally gathered again at Aulis. At that time, they sought the help from the Oracles again. Calchas, a prophet, said that the goddess Artemis was angry with Agamemnon. Calchas said that the only way that he could please Artemis was by sacrificing his most beautiful daughter to her. When Agamemnon refused, the others threatened to make Palamedes the commander of these forces, rather than him. So, in the end, Agamemnon sacrificed his daughter Iphigenia to Artemis, and then set sail for Troy, again.   
  
Calchas had also prophesized that the first Achaean to land on Troy would be the first one to die. Therefore everyone hesitated to land on Troy when they reached the shores. Eventually, Protesilaus of the Phylaceans landed first and Achilles was the second to set foot on the shores of Troy. Protesilaus and Achilles killed several Trojans upon landing, but then Protesilaus was killed by Hector, the son of Priam, the King of Troy and the brother of Paris.   
  
The war went on for 9 more years. Not many details of these nine years are documented in the texts of Greek Literature. They mostly focus on the last year of the war.   
  
Achilles was amongst the most aggressive of the Achaeans and he raided, looted and conquered several of the outer territories of Troy. The war lingered on and on, without stopping. Plots within plots and politics ruled the scene. The soldiers were tired at the end of the nine years and wanted to go back home and were on the verge of mutiny. It was only because of the army of Achilles, were they forced to stay back.   
  
However, towards the end of the almost mutiny, Agamemnon took Briseis, the concubine of Achilles. Achilles therefore refused to participate in the war.   
  
The Achaeans were relatively successful even after Achilles withdrew from the war. There was a fight between Menalaus and Paris, which ended with Aphrodite snatching the almost defeated Paris from the battlefield. Diomedes, an Achaean hero, won repute amongst his people by killing Pandaros, a Trojan hero, nearly wounding Aeneas and also for wounding the gods Aphrodite and Ares. But then the Trojans were enraged enough to drive the Achaeans back to their camp. The next day, the Trojans entered the Achaean camp and were about the burn down the Achaean ships.   
  
The Achaeans then began to request Achilles to return back into the fight. Finally, Patroclus, a relative of Achilles, went into the war wearing Achilles’ clothes and armor. He was killed by Hector who thought he was killing Achilles.   
  
Enraged by the death of Patroclus, Achilles joined the war again. Due to this Agamemnon returned Briseis back to Achilles, untouched. Back into the fray, Achilles managed to kill several Trojans. A duel raged between Hector and Achilles, which ended with Achilles killing Hector and dragging Hector’s body from his chariot. He refused to give the body back to the Trojans for the funeral. Later, King Priam came to Achilles and requested to have his son’s body back.   
  
Later on, as the war raged on, Achilles ended up killing several of Troy’s allies including Penthesilea, the Amazon Queen, and Memnon, the King of Ethiopia. After that, Achilles entered Troy. It was at that point that Paris shot a poisoned arrow, which was guided by Apollo, into the heel of Achilles. This was the only part of his body which was vulnerable, and Achilles died on the spot.   
  
A battle began to rage, and Ajax held back the Trojan army while Odysseus dragged Achilles’ body back to their camp.   
  
The war was now in its tenth year. A prophecy was made that the fall of Troy would not take place without the bow and arrow of Heracles which was now with Philoctetes. Odysseus and Diomedes found Philoctetes in Lemnos and got him Troy. He then shot Paris and killed him.   
  
Finally to totally destroy Troy, a plan was conceived by Odysseus. A giant, hollow, wooden horse was built by Epeius under the guidance of Athena. The horse was an animal sacred to the Trojans. On that horse were inscribed the words: ‘The Greeks dedicate this offering as thanks to Athena for their return back home’. The horse was filled with troops which were led by Odysseus. The rest of the army burned their camp and set sail for Tenedos.   
  
The Trojans rejoiced, thinking that the armies had finally left. They dragged the horse back into the city and began to debate what to do with it. Some of them wanted to burn it down, while others wanted to keep the horse and dedicate it to Athena.   
  
Cassandra, who had been given the gift of prophecy by Apollo was also cursed by him that no one would believe her. She warned the Trojans not to keep the horse. But, of course, no one believed her.   
  
Meanwhile, the Trojans celebrated their victory.   
  
At midnight, when the full moon rose, the troops came out of the horse and began to attack the Trojans. Most of them were drunk or sleeping. The Achaeans massacred them. Disorganized, leaderless and disoriented, the Trojans began to fight back. But to no avail. Eventually no men were left behind in Troy and the Greeks took all the women who remained, for themselves.   
  
King Priam was killed by Neoptolemus, the son of Achilles. Menelaus killed Deiphobus, a son of Priam and now the new husband of Helen. He was also on the verge of killing Helen, but was overpowered by her beauty and did not kill her.   
  
Cassandra was raped by Ajax on the altar of Athena.   
  
The Greeks then proceeded to burn down the city of Troy. Cassandra was given to Agamemnon and Neoptolemus got Andromache, the wife of Hector. Odysseus got Hecuba, the wife of Priam. The Achaeans killed Hector’s infant son Astyanax by throwing him from the walls of Troy. They sacrificed Priam’s daughter Polyxena to the grave of Achilles.